

POPULOUSNESS
WITH
ECONOMY,
THE
Wealth and Strength
OF A
KINGDOM.

Most humbly addressed to
Both Houses of PARLIAMENT,
IN
Behalf of the POOR.

Great Britain Parliament

LONDON:

Printed for J. BUCKLAND, in Pater-noster-row;
and sold by S. JAMES and E. COOK, at the
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POPULOUSNESS

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THE

WELL AND STRENGTH

OF A

KINGDOM

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Both Houses of PARLIAMENT

IN

House of the LORD



Printed for J. and W. Smith, at the
Royal Exchange, and at the
and G. Woodfall, at Chancery-Lane.

MIDDLIX

POPULOUSNESS

WITH

O E C O N O M Y, &c.

THE many difficulties this kingdom has laboured under, and the distress and want amongst the lower class of people, for the last two years past, cry aloud for every friend to his country to throw in his mite, to remove these evils.

The want of men to fight our battles, to navigate our ships, and to work up the products of our lands, all spring from one and the same cause, viz. neglecting to make a proper provision for the poor.

The proper value of a kingdom is best estimated by the number of people, and their

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industry, which, perhaps may be the more clearly seen, if we only suppose,

That if no persons from the noble Lord, to the common freeholder that has but land enough to vote for a member of Parliament, could dispose of the products of their several estates only to such as laboured upon them in agriculture, and worked up the fleece and dug in the mines, each would soon find the value of his estate, to be more or less as he has hands to work and mouths to consume. What is paid for labour is received back for necessaries, and what remains over in corn, and manufactures, &c. &c. may be exported, and is clear gain. This is well understood in America, where the plantations are deemed of more or less value in proportion to the number of people they have to work upon them.

If the steward, farmer, or occupier of any lands, do not reserve or keep a stock of provender for his cattle, so as to guard against

a thin crop, or bad harvest, but on the contrary, sells his hay, and counts it as gain, and, in this case, should a drought, or blast come upon his lands the ensuing year, the consequence is obvious. This has been exactly Britain's case; we have parted with our corn, and given a premium with it, and have severely reaped the fruits of our imprudence; and though the selling all we can spare is gain to the nation, to part with the necessaries of life, and want our selves soon after, must be the greatest stupidity, and destructive of that very interest it might be intended to promote: When corn advances and becomes very dear, the misfortunes of the poor multiply in a duplicate proportion, the very means of getting their bread is taken from them as their wants increase, the reason of which must appear extremely plain, if we do but consider when corn is at a high rate, the belly must be fed if the back suffer; when this is the case, all people in the middle and lower stations of life, begin to wear less cloathing as the only

way they have to live. The manufactures consumed by them together with the labour in making apparel for one another are prodigious articles, the total stagnation of which must add to their misfortunes greatly; all which is the reason in a dear time of their having but little work to do, and less for doing it. This has been sufficiently experienced in the course of the last two years, by the distress and want that have raged throughout the kingdom.

Here I desire the landholder, or occupier who have been filling imaginary bags, just to take a view of the state of the account: for which purpose I shall only suppose the whole labour of the people at any given rate of wages, when wheat is at five shillings a bushel, and flesh and other articles in proportion, amounts to sixty millions per annum, and likewise, suppose the money earned and paid away again in the following manner, in which I make use of even numbers

bers for the better viewing the connection
between land and trade.

Labour in agriculture, &c.	30 mill.
Ditto in manufactures and household furniture, mechanicks, &c.	} 20 mill.
Ditto ^{Hence} for consumption.	
Ditto for exportation	10 mill.
	<hr/>
Paid away	60 mill.
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For provifion	30 mill.
For house rents, &c.	8 mill.
For apparel, household furniture, &c.	} 20 mill.
In taxes, &c.	
	2 mill.
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	60 mill.
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In the next place if wheat advance to seven and fix pence a bushel, and other articles in proportion, it will make fifteen millions more than before to lay out in provifion, &c. and here comes the grand question, where
shall

shall we have that sum? Houses will not part with any thing, taxes can do nothing to the purpose, and we have only left to take it from apparel, household furniture, &c. by which we are, as it were, betwixt two fires, turn which way we will, our destruction is inevitable; viz. by laying out fifteen million less in manufactures, &c. we loose a market for that quantity of labour; from which must follow, we are by that sum less able to purchase the necessaries of life, than when corn was at five shillings a bushel, ~~for~~ & fifteen millions more will be wanted. This makes thirty millions difference to the people by which means more than the whole of apparel, &c. must cease, fifteen millions of labour lost, deducted from the whole, leave only forty five millions, and the fifteen millions added to provision make just the same sum; so nothing is left for any thing else. Here you see the intercourse of commerce for home-consumption, for the middling and lower class of people is at a stand, and others a degree higher live upon their

their capital stock, the labourer has not had it in his power to provide for himself at all; this has made him outrageous and desperate; this degree of necessity is a most deplorable state. During the last two years, and always when in like circumstances, people first part with all their money, next pawn or sell their goods, cloaths, &c. for food, and often starve under the influence of the good management of a parish. All that we have lately differed from this, is, we have had a market for a few millions of labour for the army and navy, and an addition to labour for foreign trade, where the markets would take it off, and perhaps a little home trade to serve such as have not reduced their capitals low enough to hurt them.

The labourer can at no time pay more than his wages for necessaries put altogether; and when people in general are unable to procure the common necessaries of life, all those that work upon manufactures, &c. for
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home-consumption are likewise reduced to necessity, and thus our poor suffer in a most cruel manner.

The landed interest may think as they please, but in fact an exorbitant price for provisions is contrary to their true interest, as much as ordering a steward when corn and hay is at a high rate, to feed the fat cattle, give those that labour half the usual quantity and starve all the rest; by which means he will soon bring the produce of his estate to be ~~hardly~~ *scarcely* sufficient for his stock.

Before I proceed further, I would recommend to the society for propagating arts and manufactures, to consider how far it is consistent with their plan to use their interest to preserve fifteen millions of labour per annum.

And I humbly recommend it to the great council of the nation to determine whether
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opening our ports for all sorts of provisions when wheat sells for six shillings a bushel and a bounty is paid only when under four, might not tend to keep the price a little steady.

The extremes on both sides should as much as possible be avoided: when corn is very low, &c. it cannot answer for the farmer to till the land, which must consequently tend to bring on a scarcity; and when very high, the consequence has been already sufficiently explained; so that a uniform middling price must be for the interest of all at a long run.

The enormous price poor cattle sell for wants redress; there is no grazing farm in England, but could pay the rent as well when beef sold for two pence a pound or under as at a higher rate; if the breeding counties cannot supply us, should the whole kingdom suffer rather than have cattle any where else? This evil has been gradually increasing for many years past; and tea-drink-

ing may be supposed one cause of it ; for the quantity of butter used since this has been in fashion, I make no doubt, has lessened the number of breeding farms, at least to the value of two Counties, and adds but little or nothing to feeding the hungry. All sorts of flesh are now very dear, Bacon at 8 d. or 10 d. a pound is at too high a rate for the labourer to taste it. If poor cattle of all kinds were permitted to be imported from Ireland, and a great number should be brought over, we might turn the more of our lands to grazing ; in this case we should have more fat cattle and fewer lean, by which we might victual our ships at home, which must answer our purpose extremely well, and at the same time, prevent the French from being supplied with such quantities from thence.

The number of inhabitants in a kingdom is the great object of political consideration ; and all ought to be provided for. It is this will give strength in the day of battle ; if
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the merchant could gain a million by a new branch of commerce, he would immediately conclude more men were necessary to navigate an additional number of ships, before he could have his profit: every addition to one foreign trade produces new commissions for the master manufacturer, and he likewise wants to increase his working hands, which if not to be had, there is so much loss to the nation.

The landholder, merchant, manufacturer, mechanick & labourer, in every station are all linked together in one common interest; the price of labour rises or sinks just as the demand may be; if we want a market for our goods, little work, and low wages soon follow; so the extending our commerce on the one hand, and the number of people to execute on the other, must be the spirit of trade and the interest of all.

All in the various branches of commerce, from the merchant to the workman, are

really and properly employed for the benefit of the landholder, in working up his fleece mines and timber, and carrying it to market ; and his profit is in proportion to the quantity ; our labour exchanged for money, or where we have wisdom enough to trade so as to have a ballance in our favour, is the only means to make money plentiful ; and that only can raise the value of land ; if money was scarce and worth ten per cent. land would be worth but a third of what it is now. The annual value does likewise rise in proportion to the increase of people in the kingdom if well employed ; which is a prodigious thing, in their favour, and if well understood how ought a nation to blush and be ashamed of their conduct to let the infant sink under the hand of the tender mother ? Or such as have laboured and born the burden and heat of the day in their vineyard, languish and pine away in want ?

O my country ! this is barbarity and cruelty added to bad policy ; if it is right to suckle
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the lamb for the benefit of his carcass and wool, and to store up corn and hay to reward the generous horse for his labour, to till the ground, or carry his Lord and Master ; must it not be infinitely more so to provide for every individual in the kingdom ?

Our laws for the relief of the poor, are in some respects perhaps improper ; the restraining or confining them to the parish they belong to, tends to cramp industry, and often obliges the labourer to live upon parish allowances when he might otherwise provide for himself and family in a comfortable manner. Should his industry prompt him to try to get his bread in any other part of the kingdom, he must be so far treated as a criminal, as to be sent to the house of correction, and passed at a great expence to the place he came from. Is not this a great hardship, not to say bad policy in a state, whose wealth and grandeur are supported by commerce?

Trade

Trade cannot flourish unless it be open and free; and the labouring manufacturer, mechanic, &c. who are members of it, should be at liberty to settle where most for their interest.

As the number of inhabitants is the strength of a kingdom, and the wealth of it in proportion to the quantity of labour, how much is it the interest of the state, to cherish the numerous offspring of the poor (who are the seeds of our wealth) and protect and relieve the distressed? Let the poor perish for want, and who will fill our ships with manufactures or consume the products of our lands? If they sink, the nation must soon become contemptible.

The present method for every parish to maintain its own poor, is oppressive to particulars, and the cause of thousands perishing for want. The laws made for their relief are too often consulted by parish officers to know how to get rid of them, not to give them

them bread. To understand settlements, certificates, removals, to procure them by marriages, to put out apprentices and jocky or over-reach another parish, are things too frequently practised ; which generally makes work enough for parishes to spend in law what is sufficient to maintain a great part of their poor.

A city or town that has numerous inhabitants reaps no more benefit from them as a parish in consuming the products of their lands, than what they receive in common with all other parishes that may supply them with necessaries. Corn and cattle are frequently brought from a great distance, and far or near all have a mutual interest in proportion to what is consumed ; and it is but reasonable, that all should bear a share in supporting the distressed.

If corn and other necessaries were to sink down to a quarter of the late price, it will in no respect remove the evil of want from
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multitudes of poor; those that are too young or too old to work will remain objects of distress. It is of but little use to him that cannot earn a farthing, to inform him corn is at half a crown a bushel. Even in time of plenty we have always numbers perishing for want; we can find servants to attend our flocks and herds to see that none suffer, but how few take care the poor are duly provided for? They are looked upon as a curse in most parishes that have a numerous body of inhabitants. A hungry belly can make but little impression upon the overseer that may pay a penny rate, nor the justice that may have an estate in the same parish; the former will not relieve, without an order from the latter, and the justice perhaps refers them to the next vestry, and thus they are often disappointed of relief.

It is the farmers immediate interest, the poor should consume their produce, whether they can provide for themselves or not; the price at market is always more or

less according to the demand ; starve but a tenth part of the people the markets will be immediately glutted, and consequently the price sink in proportion ; all which makes it appear, that a county rate for the relief of the common poor, or a general one for the whole kingdom, is the most equitable plan ; and as it appears, above to be for the occupiers immediate interest it should be paid by him, which he will receive again by keeping up his price, and, in the end, those that consume the remainder pay for all.

We have other laws that tend to increase the number of distressed poor, and are destructive to the true interest of the kingdom. If a husbandman was to sow tares and expect to reap wheat, he would be laughed at by all, or thought mad ; and must it not be equally ridiculous, to sow the seeds of every vice, and expect the people to be virtuous ; to scatter the seeds of indolence, and expect industry ; to sow intemperance and debauchery, and expect frugality ; to sow the cer-

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tain means of diseases and death, and expect to reap health and long life?

Sampson set firebrands to the corn of the Philistines to burn it; the people of Britain have many of them converted that nourishing product into their own destruction by their intemperate and ill management. Thus the staff of life is turned into the means of death, under the character of a cordial, as the only good the poor enjoy in this life; and so the noxious draught is greedily swallowed by many to their utter ruin.

The distillery in this respect may be looked upon as so many avenues to the regions of death; it is a sort of infernal artillery that destroys all in its way, it will kill equally as well at a distance as near, sideways or behind, neither mountains, nor hills, will stop its destructive influence.

Our brave fellows begin to look pale at five and twenty, their flesh is gone at thirty,
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and they drop soon after. This is the lot even of such as have a good constitution, and many go off the stage of life much earlier. This has destroyed more than we should lose by the sword, though we had perpetual war with France; this has been the bane of Britain, this we ought to mourn for in sackcloth and ashes. All that has been said to justify this part of the trade is, it brings in a sum to the state, that cannot be relinquished. To which give me leave to reply, if ten times the money were raised upon any articles that are generally consumed, and consistent with the health of the people, it would be happy for the nation; but to return to my subject, of providing for the poor.

If what has been said is deemed insufficient to provide for the multitude that may be in distress, when any sudden dearth comes upon the kingdom, we will proceed to find out an inexhaustible grainery and fountain that will never be dry, that all may be fed

and refreshed without being a burden to any body.

If we do but turn our thoughts and look up to the great lawgiver and governor of the universe, we shall find his tender mercies are over all, and sufficient for all; man can be at no loss to find from whence every good and perfect gift comes, how do the light and heat of the sun rejoice the heart and give vegetable life to all seeds and plants? how is the earth moistened with dew, and sprinkled with showers, and how does this divine bounty reward the provident hand that casts the seed in the ground, and the teeming earth supplies the wants of man.

His beneficent hand, multiplies our corn and cattle, flocks and herds, fish and fowl, and every necessary and every ingredient that regales and sweetens life? Were the inhabitants of Britain five times the number they are, and used but their own endeavours,
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every blessing would abound in proportion.

What is required of man, is for every one in his particular station to perform their part in this great work, and then the blessings of heaven will flow to every individual in the land.

The Lord said to Adam when he was turned out of paradise; *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.* Implying, or pointing out to him, that his future happiness depended upon his industry, that the earth would not unfold her blessings but in proportion to his labour, that if he intended to supply himself with necessaries, or garnish his table with delicacies, he must immediately set about the necessary work to accomplish it.

Self preservation is the voice of reason, and first law of nature; if we move a step farther, we shall find it binding for parents to pre-

preserve and cherish their children, from hence the analogy or fatherhood continued to all bodies of people, whether towns, cities, or kingdoms, the same law must be equally binding. We are one as to nation, one people, one great family, and every individual, unable to provide for himself, has a right derived from the first law to be taken care of.

Let not the head say to the hand I have no need of thee, nor to the feet I have no need of you ; those that labour may be deemed the hands and feet of the state, by which the body and head is supported in affluence and grandeur. If there was no poor, I mean such as labour, there would soon be no rich, therefore the common phrase of the rich being burdened with the poor is absurd; those that labour with much more propriety might say, how are we burdened with the great, that all they have arise from us, and if we include with all that labour, those too young and

and too old to work under the denomination of poor, I will venture to pronounce they want nothing of the rich, but œconomy.

Labour is the principal or spring from whence all must come; the man that will not not work that is able, is the brier and thorn that cumbers the ground. Solomon says, Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

The summer of every man is the sunshine of his days, when he is able to work; and his winter in old age, when his wants will stare him in the face, and reproach him, if he has neglected to lay up in store. If it be objected that this may not be practicable, or perhaps right to be done by every individual, and that if the labourer was to throw by a little weekly, it would swell in time, and create so much uneasiness for fear of losing it, as to break in upon and disturb
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his quiet, and thereby prevent that chearfulness natural to his station from exercise, which he would otherwise enjoy. Allowing there may be something in this, ^{it} don't ~~be~~ follow, it should not be done at all.

If it is not to be expected that the poor will lay up, the state should. 'Tis the governor of a city, or father of a family only, that is censured in time of public distress; here we must fix our security, that no one shall want in time of scarcity.

The harvest to lay up in store is in time of plenty; 'tis then some of the full and fat years should be reserved, to serve in time of scarcity; this might be taken by a proper sum when corn is cheap, and in proportion upon flesh and all luxuries; and as there is now a bounty in favour of the farmer in time of plenty, there might be then the same in favour of the labourer, in time of distress. Every man would be benefited by this measure, the treasury would be our grainery,
and

and we should have government security for all laid up, and have it again when wanted ; this would prevent indolence when our barns overflowed, nor be missed at the time of paying it, and be so much neat gain ; this would act as a spring to industry, and be making a proper use of a plentiful summer or harvest, *to lay up in store.*

This treasure should be looked upon as sacred, the blood and life of the people, and might be employed to multiply our blessings, and become an inexhaustible fund, for the benefit and interest of us all.

Cast thy bread upon the waters, and after many days thou shalt find it : a morsel out of the meal, and drop out of the cup in the days of prosperity, will be sure to be caught again in the day of adversity ; a little from all that have for those that have not, can hurt no man ; a grain thrown from every hand will soon swell the heap, and as many drops collected make a stream, which will

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increase as it runs, it must soon be sufficient to overflow and water the whole land.

We are all in our several stations properly labourers, and connected together in interest; and as labour is the spring from whence all our treasure flows here, we must divert this small stream in time of plenty to serve benevolent purposes; and as no man knows whose turn it may be to want, all ought to contribute to the common good; nothing is laid up, but all is paid away for necessities, and so passes on to the landholder; every one whose hands it may be in says its my own; this being the state of the case, the grand squabble is who shall be excused from maintaining those that may be in want by an act of providence: but all this mighty ado will be over, if a store is laid up as above.

Charity is the fulfilling the law, and the sum and substance of the gospel; to which may be added (a more powerful argument with

with most men) that it is our interest, as well as duty. The poor should be amply provided for : let your beneficence be like the sun at noon day, that warms every heart ; let the industrious man when his labour is done, have full sufficient to live comfortably ; let the fatherless and widow be amply provided for, and deemed, as they really are, a part of our wealth ; and let every poor man that has a numerous family be looked upon as a great benefactor to his country ; and all that have more children than they can comfortably maintain, be allowed sufficient to assist them. If matrimony was thus encouraged, how would it rejoice the heart of the tender mother to be enabled to cherish her little ones ? this would wipe the tears from the eyes of multitudes that are perishing for want.

This would soon put all partial, unnatural pretended charities out of countenance ; here every mother is the nurse of her own children, who may be properly dispersed to

be trained to the various branches of our manufactures all over the kingdom. When children are bred up in a homely habitation, that may be ill secured against the clemency of the season, and have an opportunity to experience the benefit of labour, and find when their little hands are employed, they have something to eat ; but on the contrary, when idle, that they must suffer hunger, this is an early spur to industry, and use makes it set natural and easy ; those on the contrary, that are trained as in many of our publick foundations, and qualified to fill the higher stations of life, and have never been used to labour, until near arrived to manhood, they can never reconcile themselves to be content with the station we may suppose nature designed them for. The greatest difficulty human nature can undergo, is to feel a change for the worse ; and this, in all probability, must be the lot of such children as are bred up in a palace, whose natural station was to live in a cottage.

Public donations and almshouses are too often, like the scape-goat of old, loaded with sin ; as the fruit is indolence, consequently the tree must be corrupt : money thus bestowed is generally parted with upon a selfish principle, not for the good it may do, but as the surest way to have it again in another world. Here, lest I should be misunderstood, I must except all such noble benefactions, as the hospitals for incurables, lunaticks, small pox, poor lying-in women, and infirmaries, &c. all which administer comfort to the distressed part of the community.

I have farther to observe, the principles our fund is established upon will draw good from evil ; the voluptuary, the squanderer, and extravagant, will contribute most to support themselves and others when reduced to want ; thus debauchery and charity will walk hand in hand, and we hope the sin of one will be wiped out by the other. A thousand things might be added in favour of this extensive publick fund, and
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ten thousand blessings flow from it to every individual in the kingdom. The doing what good we can is imitating purity itself; this only can make us the light of the world that will shine before men; thus our land may become the Eden of the world, the paradise which the deity will delight to bless; this will bring heaven to earth; and righteousness and peace will kiss each other; thus our vine and fig-tree will tower up to heaven, and their branches over-shadow our whole land, and every soul may sit down and eat: and farther, this must be the beginning of Christ's kingdom upon earth, prefigured by the prophet, when *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lye down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fattling together, and a little child shall lead them:* and finally, as the account to be given at the day of judgment may turn all upon charity, and the question be, *Have you fed the hungry, cloathed the naked, and relieved the wants of all mankind, as far as you are able?* in doing this you are those to

whom our Lord will say, *Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

I must beg leave to make a few farther reflections upon the present plan of relieving the poor.

The many difficulties of providing for a numerous family are a discouragement to matrimony, and put multitudes upon plundering their neighbours bed, by which an adulterous brood too often falls ^{to} upon the lot of many, and others glut themselves by roving, and either by violence or treachery, debauch all they can, and glory in not having the incumbrance of a family to provide for; by which means many women are left in despair, and too often through shame, or fear, make away with their infants; in this instance, man falls below the brutes, none of which neglects to cherish its offspring as far as is necessary. These may rise up
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in judgment against this generation or kingdom.

If what has here been offered is upon a good plan, the carrying it into execution is natural and easy ; in order therefore that all may be put upon an equitable footing, the present poor's rates might be purchased by the landholder, and the money applied to the public use, if one equal rate, together with our new fund, is in time of plenty established ; I shall only add a few general heads for the approbation of my superiors.

First, an overseer should have no more poor under his care than he could visit at least twice a week ; by which means he would know who is idle, and who are most in want ; he should keep an account of the behaviour of all, that the industrious might find easy relief, and the debauched or idle be not too liberally supported when in distress ;

tress, this would be a check upon their behaviour, and if the overseer was only to lend such in their necessity, and take a pledge for paying it again in small sums weekly, it would be a lesson of frugality, and temperance, and be just so much money gained. There are many more little things that might be added.

But we will proceed next to a master in proper districts to employ all that want work, If the terms are at a little lower rate than the common wages of the country, none will apply but those that cannot get work of other masters; which would put it in the power of all that can work to provide for themselves, and their labour will be so much neat gain to the nation. This would not be like our present workhouses to provide a table and keep the poor idle.

Both these officers might have general orders from a monthly vestry, and their accounts examined.

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Every man of any humanity would deem it an honour to be one in this publick work.

These accounts might be transmitted once in six months to be inspected by a general meeting, composed of gentlemen and principal tradesmen of the country, who might at the same time enquire what parts are unemployed and think of proper measures for setting them to work. A trade may be carried on by the publick, to great advantage, when a private person would soon be ruined by it; for instance, if a hundred pounds worth of raw materials was manufactured in a country that would otherwise be idle, and the labour raise the commodity to a thousand pounds, and when carried to a foreign market, it will sell for but eight hundred; here would be two hundred pounds loss to a private person, and the nation gain seven hundred by it. If a bounty was paid upon manufactures for such markets where

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we may be underfold, that would answer much the same valuable purpose.

All the above accounts should be transmitted to a superior court.

Thus in a short time we should come into as regular a method to provide for every individual in the kingdom, as any man is in his common business, and add millions annually to the national wealth. There is no more difficulty to maintain a family of ten million, than ten people. Nothing is wanting, but œconomy.

The Lords of trade and plantations may in their wisdom look out for new markets, for our manufactures, &c. examine what branches of commerce are for the interest of the kingdom, and what countries we may trade with, that the ballance may not be against us. It can be no service to us to fetch treasure from one country and suffer it to be stole from us by another. To be
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wise as serpents and harmless as doves is a useful lesson to a nation as well as every man in private life——If what has been offered is for the public good, may God of his infinite mercy add a blessing to it, and convey it to the hearts of those in power; and if the least evil can come from it, that it may be treated with contempt and sink into oblivion, is the prayer and wish of a friend to Mankind.

F I N I S.



Just published price six-pence. **The Way to Wealth and Glory or, Taxes odious only in Name; most humbly addressed to both Houses of Parliament.**

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